



TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

Prince George's County, Maryland

Incorporated in 1896 ~ Sixth Oldest Municipality in PG County

TOWN MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 12, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Calvo, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Wilkinson, CMs Almoguera, Dennison, and Kulpa-Eddy. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Murphy, Officer Roberson, Treasurer Lape, Clerk Harper and prospective election judges Sharmila Bhatia, Richard Ahrens, Sharon McCraney, Paul McNulty, Debby Steele-Snyder, and Robin Walukonis.

Mayor Calvo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. SWEARING-IN OF ELECTION JUDGES

Mayor Calvo swore in Chief Election Judge, Sharmila Bhatia, first, and then Election Judges Richard Ahrens, Sharon McCraney, Paul McNulty, Debby Steele-Snyder, and Robin Walukonis. Election judges Lee Fuerst and Shirley Sorensen were unable to attend and will be sworn in later.

2. MINUTES

Clerk Harper read a summary of the January 8 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by MPT Wilkinson and second by CM Dennison, the minutes were approved 5-0.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Lape gave the Treasurer's report for the month of January. The totals for the FY 2013 and FY 2014 general fund balance were missing. Treasurer Lape provided corrected versions of the report.

4. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Calvo announced that trash pickup will be cancelled this Thursday and Friday due to the impending snow storm so the Public Works crew can focus on removal operations. As the coming Monday is a holiday, the next trash pickup day will be next Tuesday. Mayor Calvo requested that residents park their cars driveway or on their property so streets can be properly plowed. Anyone who needs assistance during the storm may call the police who will be on duty through himself.

In conformance with a new State law, Mayor Calvo announced that the Council held an executive session on January 27 from 10 p.m. - 11:06 p.m. to hear a direct appeal to a performance evaluation. At the February 3 worksession, the Council received budget requests from the Police Department, the Parks & Recreation Department, and the Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness Committee (NW/EP). The remaining budget requests will be presented at the February 12 worksession and the Town Administrator's budget at the March 3 worksession. Lastly, March 4 is the filing deadline for any resident wishing to run for Town Council. Forms and information can be obtained at the Town office.

5. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Administration: CM Almoguera announced that in winter the regular meetings of the Playgroup are held on Mondays at 10 am in the Town Center. Other play dates may be scheduled as needed. Anyone wishing to find out about newly scheduled or rescheduled play dates is encouraged to join the Playgroup Facebook page at [pgcountyconsignment](https://www.facebook.com/pgcountyconsignment).

Code Compliance: CM Kulpa-Eddy reported that the Code Department remains without a director for the near future. She asked residents for their continued patience and understanding. Acting Director and Town Administrator Murphy has compiled statistics about code activities over the last few years, which reflect the absence of a full-time code director for the last six months. However, requests for building, POD and dumpster permits appear to be on the rise, which could be a sign that residents are ready to invest in improving their homes. Rental inspections are also up but citations for code violations are less than half of what was reported in previous years. Residents may help identify code violations such as trash, overgrown vegetation and vacant properties by calling the Code Department at 301-513-9331 or send an e-mail to code@town.berwyn-heights.md.us.

Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs: CM Dennison announced upcoming events, including a first time Game Night on March 8, the annual Talent Show on March 21, and a Town cleanup in April. She also noted that tonight's meeting with school board member Peggy Higgins has been canceled.

Public Health and Safety: Officer Roberson gave the police activities report for January. There were 8 Part I offenses, including 1 robbery, 1 burglary and 6 from autos. Car thefts could probably be eliminated if people remembered to lock their cars. One of 2 arrests was made due to neighbors reporting someone sleeping in a car on the side of the road. When officers investigated, they found that the car was stolen and the man had been in a hit and run accident. Officer Roberson reminded everyone to stay safe during the storm and encouraged the elderly to contact the police if they need assistance.

Public Works: MPT Wilkinson said that last week a pedestrian was struck and killed on Route 1 at Knox Road. He reminded everyone to look out for pedestrians slowing down. He also reminded residents that yard waste must now be bagged in paper yard waste bags or designated containers. The paper bags are available at grocery and hardware stores, and the Town office plans to have some on hand to ease the transition.

MPT Wilkinson said he received several comments about the crack sealing Public Works did last fall. Residents report that some of the asphalt is flaking off. Director Lockley has talked to the vendor about the issue and was told that the flaking asphalt may be an overflow. Director Lockley continues to research the issue and may try out a different product or technique in the future. With respect to the impending snow storm, he asked residents to park off the street and to clear sidewalks that may be in front of their homes. The Public Works Department is exploring expanding recycling paper from the elementary school to capture more white office paper used at the school.

MPT Wilkinson announced that he will not run for the Town Council in this election. His family and a new job are placing too high a demand on his time. However, he enjoyed his time on the Council and may run again in the future.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Green Team: Mayor Calvo reported that the fence was erected at the community garden last week. The process was a little more complicated than expected as neighbors complained about trucks being parked in their driveway. The Green Team was pleased to have the fence up and is looking forward to renting plots, which will become available in March. Applications and information will be published in the next Bulletin.

Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness: CM Kulpa-Eddy reported that a CERT training workshop is scheduled for March 8 and 9 in Clinton. To register, interested residents can call James Murrow at 240-601-3855. However, they may be wait-listed if the class is full. The NW/EP will host a tasting of Maryland wine on April 25 to raise funds for the committee. The next NW/EP meeting will take place on March 5.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 1-2014 - Support for FY 2014 MEA EmPower LMI Communities Grant: Clerk Harper read a summary of the Resolution. MPT Wilkinson moved to adopt. Dennison seconded. Mayor Calvo explained that this Resolution supports a collaboration of Prince George's County municipalities, led by the Town of Bladensburg, to obtain grant funding for energy efficiency projects. Under the grant provisions, each municipality is eligible to nominate 15 low income families to receive energy assistance funds for their homes. There is no cost to the Town of Berwyn Heights in signing onto the collaboration agreement. With no comments, the Council voted 6 to 0 to approve the Resolution.

9. CITIZENS DISCUSSION

Steve Blizzard, Pontiac Street, asked about the status of the priority I sidewalk project, noting that he is the owner of the property at Pontiac and Quebec Street, which will be affected by the project. He is concerned that he may lose up to 1,500 square feet of his property and possibly a couple of mature oak trees.

Mayor Calvo replied the Town has held several public hearings on the sidewalks over the last couple of years. The project is now in the design and engineering phase and is awaiting approval from Prince George's County for the required stormwater mitigation to move forward. He clarified that the planned 5' wide sidewalk will be built on the Pontiac Street side of Mr. Blizzard's property, and will be located entirely within the Town's right of way. As such, no easement is needed. The Town has been sensitive to saving as many trees as possible impacted by the sidewalks and is willing to discuss the plans with Mr. Blizzard to come up with an acceptable solution. Mr. Blizzard agreed to this.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Signed: Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk

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